

**City of Atlanta**  
**Shirley Franklin, Mayor**

Lisa Borders, City Council President

**City Council Members:**

District 1, Carla Smith	404.330.6039
District 2, Debi Starnes	404.330.6038
District 3, Ivory Lee Young, Jr.	404.330.6046
District 4, Cleta Winslow	404.330.6047
District 5, Natalyn Archibong	404.330.6048
District 6, Anne Fauver	404.330.6049
District 7, Howard Shook	404.330.6050
District 8, Clair Muller	404.330.6051
District 9, Felicia A. Moore	404.330.6044
District 10, Clarence T. Martin	404.330.6055
District 11, Jim Maddox	404.330.6054
District 12, Joyce Sheperd	404.330.6053

At Large:	
Post 1, Ceasar C. Mitchell	404.330.6052
Post 2, Mary Norwood	404.330.6302
Post 3, H. Lamar Willis	404.330.6041

**How Can You Help?**

- Call the City Arborist if you believe someone is not in compliance with the tree ordinance. All permitted non-hazardous tree removals should be posted with a yellow sign, which gives a deadline for appealing the removal to the Tree Conservation Commission.
- Plant new trees.
- Follow and understand the Tree Protection Ordinance, Chapter 158.
- Do not remove trees 6 inches in diameter or greater without a permit.
- Notify the City Arborist at (404) 330-6874.
- Do not remove street or sidewalk trees without a permit.

**Tree Brochures Available**

Copies of this brochure are available free of charge for citizens of Atlanta. To obtain multiple copies for your group or organization contact the City Arborist at (404) 330-6874 or download a copy at [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov)

**General Tree Information**

- Tree roots keep trees alive and must be protected from construction. Heavy equipment will compact soil and kill tree roots. Do not store or operate equipment in tree protection area.
- Most roots of trees are in the top 18" of soil. The critically important absorbing roots are in the top 3". Do not add or remove soil in the root save area of trees.
- Roots can extend twice the distance of the tree's branches. Always protect the root save area during construction.

**References:**

- 1) City Arborist for trees on private property (404) 330-6874
- 2) City Arborist for trees on streets or sidewalks (404) 817-6813
- 3) Tree Conservation Commission (404) 330-6874
- 4) Trees Atlanta (404) 522-4097  
[www.treesatlanta.org](http://www.treesatlanta.org)

**Don't Get Fined!**

**Call Before You Cut!**

**Read this Brochure and  
Understand the**

**City of Atlanta  
Tree Protection  
Ordinance.....**

**The Tree Protection Ordinance**

**Before cutting a tree, make sure you know and understand the Tree Protection Ordinance.**



# The Tree Protection Ordinance

## Introduction

The city of Atlanta is known for its trees. They shade our homes and streets, help clean our air, reduce our energy needs, protect our ground water and provide wildlife habitat.

In 1977, the City Council passed a law to protect Atlanta's trees. Amended in 1995, 2001 and 2002, the current law protecting trees is referred to as the "Tree Protection Ordinance." This brochure explains its key features.

## Key Points of the Ordinance

1. You must have a permit to remove any tree 6 inches in diameter or greater at breast height, or you will be fined.
2. Parking lots with 30 or more parking spaces must comply with ordinance 158-30.
3. Tree removal notice for construction or landscaping must be posted for 15 days before tree removal unless the tree is deemed hazardous by the City Arborist.
4. Tree protection fencing must be in place through the entire time of development.
5. No storage or digging can be done within the tree protection fence.

## What does the Tree Ordinance Do?

- The Ordinance is a set of rules to prevent a net loss of trees and to protect mature trees.
- It specifies that trees 6 inches in diameter or greater may not be removed or disturbed by construction equipment without a permit issued by the City Arborist to the property owner.
- It requires, prior to and during construction, that tree protection fencing remain around the root save area. The root save area is a circle having a radius of one foot for each one inch of tree diameter at breast height.
- It specifies when trees need to be replanted.
- It sets recompense for permitted tree removals and fines for violations of the ordinance. All recompense collected under the tree ordinance is placed into a Trust Fund for the protection, maintenance, and regeneration of Atlanta's trees and other forest resources.

### Call Before You Cut a Tree on Your Property

Call (404) 330-6874 and speak to the City Arborist, For emergencies along streets and sidewalks, call 911.

## What Does the Tree Ordinance Cover?

It is the policy of the City of Atlanta that there should not be any net loss of trees within the city limits. The tree protection ordinance establishes standards to ensure that the citizens of Atlanta can continue to enjoy the benefits provided by our trees. Key features of the ordinance include information on:

- Obtaining a permit for cutting trees
- Planting new trees to replace trees removed
- Protecting trees during construction
- Determining whether a tree is dead or diseased

## How to Obtain a Tree Removal Permit

To remove trees on private property call the City Arborist at (404) 330-6874. To remove trees on streets or sidewalks call the City Arborist at (404) 817-6813.

The City Arborist will assist you to:

- 1) Determine whether your tree(s) can be cut or will be impacted by construction
- 2) Determine how many replacement trees will need to be planted
- 3) Calculate whether you will need to make a payment into the Tree Trust Fund

The Tree Conservation Commission is an appeal board that reviews the decisions of the City Arborist if you disagree.

## Why Do We Have a Tree Ordinance?

- Trees are important to our health. We need to preserve and protect our trees.
- Trees provide beauty to Atlanta.
- Trees clean the air by removing pollutants, dust and carbon dioxide.
- Trees produce the oxygen we breathe.
- Trees lower the temperature by shading our homes and streets.
- Trees lower air-conditioning costs by providing cooling shade.
- Trees reduce erosion and stormwater runoff and help to keep streams clean.
- Trees reduce the Urban Heat Island.

### Copies of the Tree Protection Ordinance are Available

The City of Atlanta "Tree Protection Ordinance" is Chapter 158, Vegetation, Article II, Tree Protection

For a copy of the ordinance or for more information, contact The City Arborist  
City of Atlanta Bureau of Buildings  
55 Trinity Ave., SW, Atlanta, GA 30335-0309  
at (404) 330-6874  
[www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov)